

Message Text

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TAGS: RH PDEV UK

SUBJECT: RHODESIA: PRESIDENT STEVENS' STATEMENT

REF: FREETOWN 2888

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF STATEMENT ISSUED BY PRESIDENT SIAKA STEVENS AFTER THE BRIEFING GIVEN HIM ON THE RHODESIAN SETTLEMENT PROPOSALS BY THE ACTING BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER ACCOMPANIED BY AMBASSADOR LINEHAN:

"THE PREOCCUPATION OF THE GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE TO SEE THE RESTORATION OF LEGALITY TO THE POLITICAL PROCESS IN ZIMBABWE HAS FOR LONG REMAINED AS PRIMORDIAL AS HAS BEEN OUR SOLIDARITY WITH THE AFRICAN LIBERATION MOVEMENTS IN THAT COUNTRY.

ONE OF THE MOST ENDURING TENETS OF THE CONDUCT OF OUR

FOREIGN POLICY IS BUTTRESSED ON OUR FUNDAMENTAL BELIEF IN THE SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES BY PEACEFUL MEANS. THIS IS WHY WE DO ENTERTAIN CONSIDERABLE HOPES IN THE POSSIBILITIES OF A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT OF THE ZIMBABWE PROBLEM, AS CONTAINED IN THE NEW ANGLO-AMERICAN PROPOSALS FOR RESTORING
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LEGALITY IN "RHODESIA".

SUCH HOPES (I HASTEN TO ADD HOWEVER) CAN ONLY BE COUCHED IN CAUTION, FOR DEALINGS WITH THE IAN SMITH REGIME IN THE PAST, HAVE LEFT US LITTLE REASON, TO VIEW THIS NEW EFFORT, OTHERWISE.

THIS IS ALSO WHY THE SEARCH FOR A JUST AND EQUITABLE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF ZIMBABWE HAS BEEN SUCH AN ENIGMA, IN SPITE OF ALL THE PAST BRILLIANT IDEAS FORMULATED TO BRING IT ABOUT.

THESE MISGIVINGS ASIDE, MY GOVERNMENT LAUDS THE DIMENSIONS OF THE NEW PROPOSALS. THEY IMPRESS ME BOTH IN TEXT AND IN SUBSTANCE AS A CONSTRUCTIVE FRAMEWORK WITHIN WHICH, SETTLEMENT BASED ON MAJORITY RULE AND INDEPENDENCE FOR ZIMBABWE, HAS MORE THAN A REASONABLE CHANCE OF SUCCESS.

THE PRACTICAL MEASURES WHICH THE PROPOSALS CONTAIN TO ENSURE THE EFFECTIVE TRANSFER TO POWER TO A MAJORITY GOVERNMENT WITHIN A SPECIFIC TIME LIMIT, AND IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF PEACE AND SECURITY FOR ALL CONCERNED, ARE WORTHY OF OUR COMMENDATION AND SUPPORT. IN THIS CONNECTION MY GOVERNMENT IS READY AND WILLING TO CONTRIBUTE ITS SHARE TO THE UNITED NATIONS ZIMBABWE FORCE AS CONTEMPLATED IN THE PROPOSALS. AT THE SAME TIME ALL THINGS CONSIDERED WE BELIEVE THAT THE TERMS AND PROPOSALS COULD BE IMPROVED UPON FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE OPPRESSED MAJORITY.

IT IS MY CONVICTION THAT THE PROPOSED ZIMBABWE DEVELOPMENT FUND, IF GENEROUSLY SUBSCRIBED TO BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, COULD ALONG WITH THE MEASURES PROPOSED FOR UNCLASSIFIED

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SECURITY, ENSURE A PROSPEROUS START INTO THE FUTURE OF AN INDEPENDENT GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF ZIMBABWE.

WE RE-AFFIRM OUR UNFLINCHING SOLIDARITY WITH THE LIBERATION MOVEMENTS IN ZIMBABWE WHOSE CONTINUING STRUGGLE CAN WELL BE COMPLEMENTED BY GIVING A CHANCE TO THESE NEW PROPOSALS FOR SETTLEMENT.

IAN SMITH MIGHT DELUDE HIMSELF AND HIS ILLEGAL WHITE MINORITY GOVERNMENT BY CLAIMING THAT HE CAN BRING ABOUT AN "INTERNAL SETTLEMENT". BUT TIME IS DECIDEDLY RUNNING OUT ON HIM. THIS MIGHT WELL BE HIS LAST CHANCE TO ACCEPT THE INEVITABILITY OF MAJORITY RULE WITH HONOR AND THUS PREVENT UNNECESSARY LOSS OF HUMAN LIFE THAT WILL OTHERWISE RESULT FROM ARMED STRUGGLE.

IN CONCLUSION, WE ARE HEARTENED BY THE RECOGNITION IN THE PROPOSALS, OF THE INCREASING ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AS REPRESENTED WITHIN THE U.N. IN GENERAL AND THE COMMONWEALTH IN PARTICULAR, TO BRING ABOUT A JUST AND HONORABLE SETTLEMENT OF THIS PROBLEM WHICH HAS BEEN OF GRACE CONCERN TO ALL HUMANITY FOR SO

LONG.

SIERRA LEONE LOOKS FORWARD TO THE DAY WHEN ZIMBABWE
IS AN INDEPENDENT COUNTRY UNDER MAJORITY RULE, WILL TAKE
ITS RIGHTFUL PLACE AMONG COMMUNITY OF THE FREE NATIONS OF
THE WORLD."
LINEHAN

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